

Nita Mehta's
desserts





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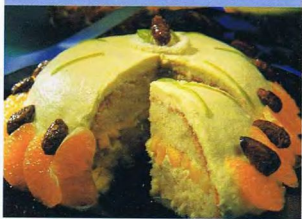
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INTRODUCTION

*H*ere is a treasury of wonderful desserts – some classical, all-time favourites, others that are from the new-style cuisine of today and many that I have developed myself. Desserts have always been the special way to express your love for your family and friends. The sugary fragrance and eye appeal of these culinary triumphs will surprise and delight every time. Invitations to your dinner parties will be in hot demand and your family will vote you the world's greatest dessert maker!

This book is packed with scrumptious ideas to suit any meal. Look out for step-by-step instructions which show you how easy it is to make any dessert look and taste spectacular. My worldwide travels and my interest in exploring new restaurants and international cuisines has helped me to create original and exciting desserts especially for you, the readers of this book.

Nita Menta

INTERNATIONAL CONVERSION GUIDE

These are not exact equivalents; they've been rounded-off to make measuring easier.

WEIGHTS & MEASURES

METRIC	IMPERIAL
15 g	½ oz
30 g	1 oz
60 g	2 oz
90 g	3 oz
125 g	4 oz (¼ lb)
155 g	5 oz
185 g	6 oz
220 g	7 oz
250 g	8 oz (½ lb)
280 g	9 oz
315 g	10 oz
345 g	11 oz
375 g	12 oz (¾ lb)
410 g	13 oz
440 g	14 oz
470 g	15 oz
500 g	16 oz (1 lb)
750 g	24 oz (1½ lb)
1 kg	30 oz (2 lb)

LIQUID MEASURES

METRIC	IMPERIAL
30 ml	1 fluid oz
60 ml	2 fluid oz
100 ml	3 fluid oz
125 ml	4 fluid oz
150 ml	5 fluid oz (¼ pint/1 gill)
190 ml	6 fluid oz
250 ml	8 fluid oz
300 ml	10 fluid oz (½ pint)
500 ml	16 fluid oz
600 ml	20 fluid oz (1 pint)
1000 ml	1¾ pints

CUPS & SPOON MEASURES

METRIC	IMPERIAL
1 ml	¼ tsp
2 ml	½ tsp
5 ml	1 tsp
15 ml	1 tbsp
60 ml	¼ cup
125 ml	½ cup
250 ml	1 cup

HELPFUL MEASURES

METRIC	IMPERIAL
3 mm	1/8 in
6 mm	¼ in
1 cm	½ in
2 cm	¾ in
2.5 cm	1 in
5 cm	2 in
6 cm	2½ in
8 cm	3 in
10 cm	4 in
13 cm	5 in
15 cm	6 in
18 cm	7 in
20 cm	8 in
23 cm	9 in
25 cm	10 in
28 cm	11 in
30 cm	12 in (1ft)

HOW TO MEASURE

When using the graduated metric measuring cups, it is important to shake the dry ingredients loosely into the required cup. Do not tap the cup on the table, or pack the ingredients into the cup unless otherwise directed. Level top of cup with a knife. When using graduated metric measuring spoons, level top of spoon with a knife. When measuring liquids in the jug, place jug on a flat surface, check for accuracy at eye level.

OVEN TEMPERATURE

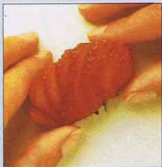
These oven temperatures are only a guide. Always check the manufacturer's manual.

	°C (Celsius)	°F (Fahrenheit)	Gas Mark
Very low	120	250	1
Low	150	300	2
Moderately low	160	325	3
Moderate	180	350	4
Moderately high	190	375	5
High	200	400	6
Very high	230	450	7

Quick Decorating Ideas

Generally whipped cream is used to decorate desserts. Here you have some lighter and simple yet fascinating ways to decorate the scrumptious desserts.

STRAWBERRY FANS: Slice a strawberry lengthwise into thin slices, cutting almost till the end, but keep the end part of the strawberry together. Fan out the slices by pushing the slices gently towards your right, so that they open up like a fan.

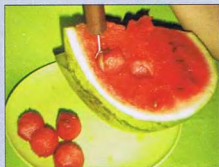


You can do the same with large grapes too.

CHOCOLATE THINS & NUTTIES: Arrange just 3 nutties in the centre and top with a sprig of mint or cut a chocolate thin into 2 pieces to get 2 triangular pieces for the centre of a chocolate desserts. See picture on cover.

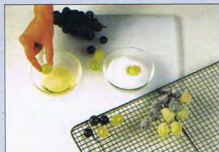
CHOCOLATE SPRINKLERS: Sprinkle 1 tsp of these at serving time on a white surface.

FRUIT BALLS: Use a melon scooper to make balls of water melon or mango. See picture.



MINT LEAVES: These add colour to the dish. Keep leaves in cold water overnight to get crisp green leaves and arrange it on the dessert, just a couple of hours before the dessert is to be served.

FROSTED FRUITS: Dip fruits like grapes in egg white or lemon juice and roll in powdered sugar. You can also simply sprinkle some powdered sugar through a sieve on the arranged fruits.



CRUSHED COOKIES: Make a border of coarsely crushed cookies. Use chocolate cookies on a white surface and vice-versa.

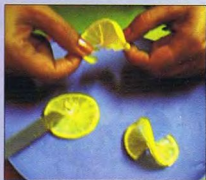


TWISTS: Cut a slice from a big and firm lemon. Cut halfway from any side of the slice till almost the centre. Gently twist and place on the dessert.

MARBLE EFFECT: Mix some jam or fruit crush lightly into your dessert mixture to get a marble effect.

DUSTING POWDERED SUGAR: You may dust powdered sugar through a sieve or a sugar sprinkler on hot puddings or on the serving plate.

FEATHER ICING: Place coloured icing in a piping bag and pipe thin straight lines across the cake surface iced with a plain white cream or butter icing. Draw a skewer across the lines at $\frac{3}{4}$ " intervals and then back in the opposite direction between the original lines, giving a feather effect. This technique works well for all shape of cakes.



Decorating Individual Servings

Decorate the plate before you place the piece of dessert on it. It can be done with ready made chocolate sauce, or any home made sauce. For home made sauce, cook 1 cup water with 2 tsp cornstarch, 2 tbsp sugar and 1 tsp butter till it attains a saucy consistency. Remove from heat. Add some lemon juice, essence and colour. You may add green, pink, yellow or any colour, depending on the colour of the dessert and the plate. When the sauce is no longer hot, pour on a serving platter in a zig-zag design, continuous lines or circles at intervals. Place the dessert piece on the decorated plate. Arrange some fresh fruits on the sides and dust them with some powdered sugar. You may also pour some sauce on the top of the dessert, on one side, making the sauce flow or drip down on the plate.



Mousses and Souffles



Chiffon Lemon Soufflé

A perfect dessert for a summer evening – cool, light and refreshingly lemony.

Serves 8

INGREDIENTS

375 g/12 oz heavy whipping cream (1½ cups)

6 tbsp lemon juice

1 cup caster sugar

4 tsp gelatine, ¼ cup water

4 large eggs

a few drops of lemon yellow food colour

½ tsp vanilla essence

DECORATION

a few glace cherries, lemon twists

10-12 almonds - crushed roughly

METHOD



- 1 Prepare a soufflé dish (straight sided dish) by tying around it a broad strip of butter paper so that it stands about 2" above the top of the dish. If you wish you can secure the paper with scotch tape instead of a thread.
- 2 Sprinkle gelatine on ¼ cup water kept in a small micro proof bowl. Keep aside for 10 minutes. Microwave for 20 seconds to dissolve it. Keep aside.
- 3 Separate the egg yolk & white of the eggs. Beat egg yolks in a bowl with the lemon juice & sugar over a double boiler, until creamy. Remove from hot water and beat until cold.
- 4 Add gelatine solution to the egg yolk mixture gradually and stir well. Allow it to set a little in the refrigerator. Do not let it become too stiff or set. (Make quite certain that the egg yolk-gelatine mixture has stiffened slightly only before adding the cream and egg whites. If it over sets, i.e. solidifies even a little, keep it over a pan of hot water and stir till it is semi-liquid again).
- 5 In the meanwhile whip cream with vanilla essence till it becomes thick and attains a soft peak stage. Keeping aside ¼ cup whipped cream for decoration, fold in rest of the whipped cream, into the semi-liquid egg yolk mixture.
- 6 Beat egg whites with food colour till stiff peaks are formed. Fold in stiffened egg whites into egg yolk mixture.
- 7 Pour into the prepared soufflé dish, leave until set; then gently remove the paper.
- 8 To decorate, gently stick the almonds on the sides above the dish. Top the soufflé with lemon twists and glace cherries.

Mango Paradise

The exotic mango flavour of this creamy dessert is equally delicious with tinned mangoes.

Serves 6

INGREDIENTS

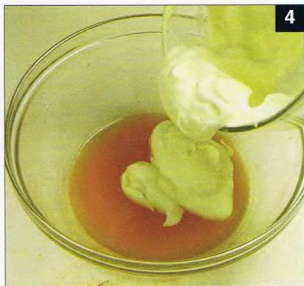
2¼ cups mango juice
3 tsp gelatine
250 g/8 oz heavy whipping cream (1 cup)
6 tbsp sugar
1 mango or a piece of papaya - cut into
slices and scooped to get balls with a
melon baller
a few drops of yellow food colour

TOPPING

2 tbsp mango crush or conserve

METHOD

- 1 Sprinkle gelatine on ¼ cup juice kept in a small micro proof bowl. Keep aside for 10 minutes. Microwave for 20 seconds to dissolve it. Keep aside.
- 2 Mix the remaining mango juice and sugar on medium heat for a few minutes to dissolve sugar. Remove from heat.
- 3 Add the hot gelatine solution to the above juice. Cool. Chill in the freezer for about 20 minutes only, till thick but not set. Beat well till smooth and fluffy.
- 4 Beat cream in a bowl till fluffy. Do not over beat the cream. Add whipped cream and yellow colour to mango mixture. Refrigerate for 3-4 hours till set.
- 5 Decorate with mango crush and mango/papaya slices or balls. Serve chilled.





Purple Velvet Mousse

The striking colour of this smooth black-grape dessert makes it a winner!

Serves 6-8

INGREDIENTS

- 200 g/7 oz sweetened condensed milk
- 4 tsp gelatine dissolved in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water
- 250 g/8 oz black grapes
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 2 tbsp grape preserve or jam
- $3\frac{1}{2}$ cups yogurt - hang in a cheese cloth for 30 minutes
- a few drops of vanilla essence
- a few drops of strawberry red food colour
- 2 egg whites, optional, see note

GLAZE (OPTIONAL)

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water, 3 tbsp grape preserve
- 1 tsp cornstarch

METHOD

- 1 Hang yogurt in a cheese cloth for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour.



- 2 Cook grapes with 1 cup water and 2 tbsp sugar. Boil. Simmer on low heat for 10 minutes till they turn soft. Remove from heat. Cool. Blend in a mixer to a puree. Strain the puree. Discard the residue.
- 3 Sprinkle gelatine on $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water kept in a small micro proof bowl. Keep aside for 10 minutes. Microwave for 20 seconds to dissolve it. Add gelatine to grape puree. Keep aside.
- 4 Beat the condensed milk, essence and yogurt in a pan till creamy.
- 5 Add the gelatine and grape puree to the yogurt mix. Mix and keep in the freezer for about 20 minutes till slightly thick, but not set.
- 6 Remove the thickened mixture from the fridge & beat till smooth. Add 2-3 tbsp grape preserve & mix lightly.
- 7 If using egg whites, whip egg whites till stiff and frothy. Fold in the egg whites with a spoon.
- 8 Transfer to individual mousse cups or a serving dish. Keep in the fridge for 3-4 hours or till set.
- 9 For the glaze, mix all ingredients. Cook till slightly thick. Remove from heat. When glaze no longer remains hot, pour over the set dessert.

Note: *The addition of egg whites makes the dessert even more lighter. If you do not wish to add egg whites, omit step 7.*



Coffee Caramel Mousse

With the detailed instructions in this recipe you can make this professional-looking dessert.

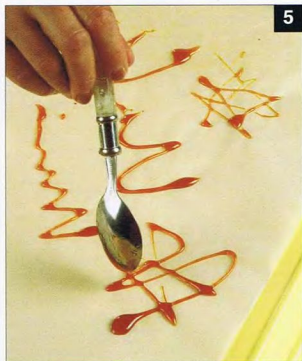
Serves 4-5

INGREDIENTS

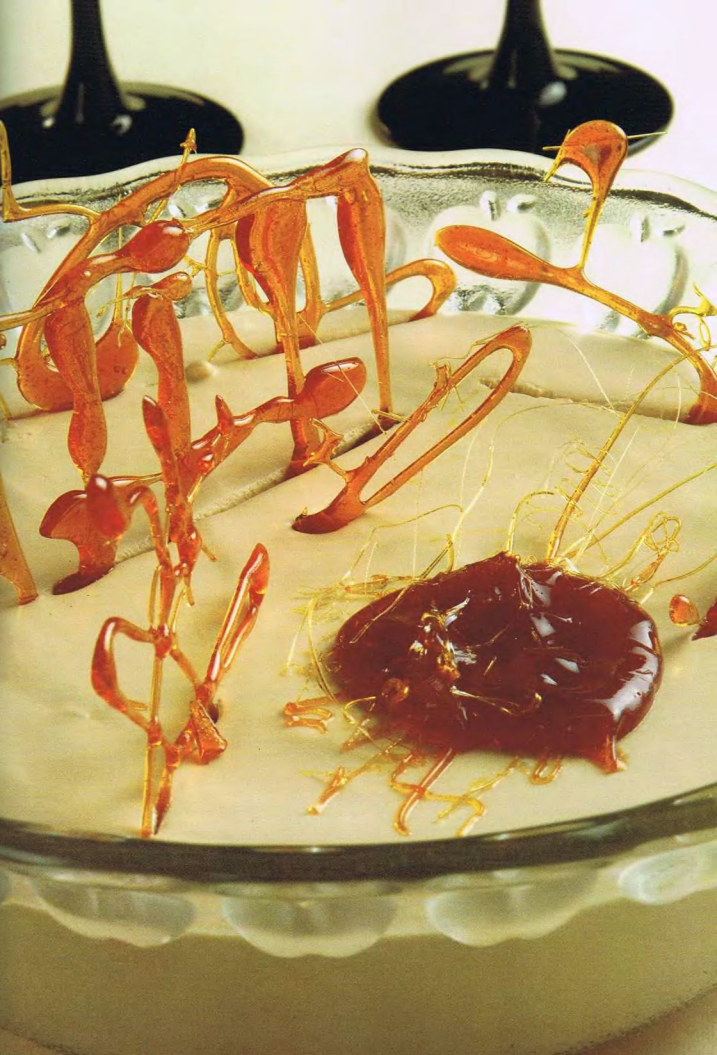
125 g/4 oz (slightly less than $\frac{3}{4}$ cup) sugar
1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups water
2 tsp instant coffee
2 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp gelatine
375 g/12 oz heavy whipping cream (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups)
1 tsp vanilla essence
PRALINE POWDER AND SHARTS
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar

METHOD

- 1 Boil water. Add coffee. Keep the black coffee aside.
- 2 Heat sugar in a clean heavy bottomed deep pan on low heat. Keep stirring continuously till sugar melts. Continue cooking, till sugar turns golden brown. Remove from heat.
- 3 Carefully add the prepared hot black coffee into the caramel syrup, stirring continuously. Simmer on low heat for 2-3 minutes till caramel dissolves completely. Remove from heat.
- 4 Sprinkle gelatine on $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water kept in a small micro proof bowl. Keep aside for 10 minutes. Microwave for 20 seconds to dissolve it. Add the gelatine solution to the coffee-caramel syrup, stirring continuously. Let it cool to room temperature.



- 5 Beat essence and cream till slightly thick and fluffy. Fold cream into the above mixture. Transfer to a serving dish or to individual serving cups. Keep the mousse in the fridge for 3-4 hours or till set.
- 6 For praline, grease a cookie sheet/kitchen platform with some oil. Spread $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar in a small non stick skillet. Keep on low heat for 2-3 minutes, without touching the sugar. When it starts to turn golden, stir just once gently from the edges. Remove from heat and with a teaspoon pour the caramel on the sheet to make abstract designs or tall sharts. Cool for 10 minutes and remove sharts gently. Arrange some on the set dessert. Crush 1-2 pieces to a rough powder and sprinkle over the dessert.





Almond Soufflé with Ruby Sauce

This delicate dessert glows like a jewel – almonds and strawberries for your royal guest!

Serves 8

INGREDIENTS

2 cups milk
4 tsp gelatine
250 g/8 oz heavy whipping cream (1 cup)
1/3 cup sugar
2 drops sweet almond essence
15 almonds - blanched & very finely chopped

RUBY SAUCE

½ cup strawberry jam or preserve
1 cup water, 1 tbsp sugar
1 tbsp cornstarch dissolved in 2 tbsp water

DECORATION

a few almonds - sliver and dry roast in a pan on low heat till light golden
a few strawberries or cherries

METHOD

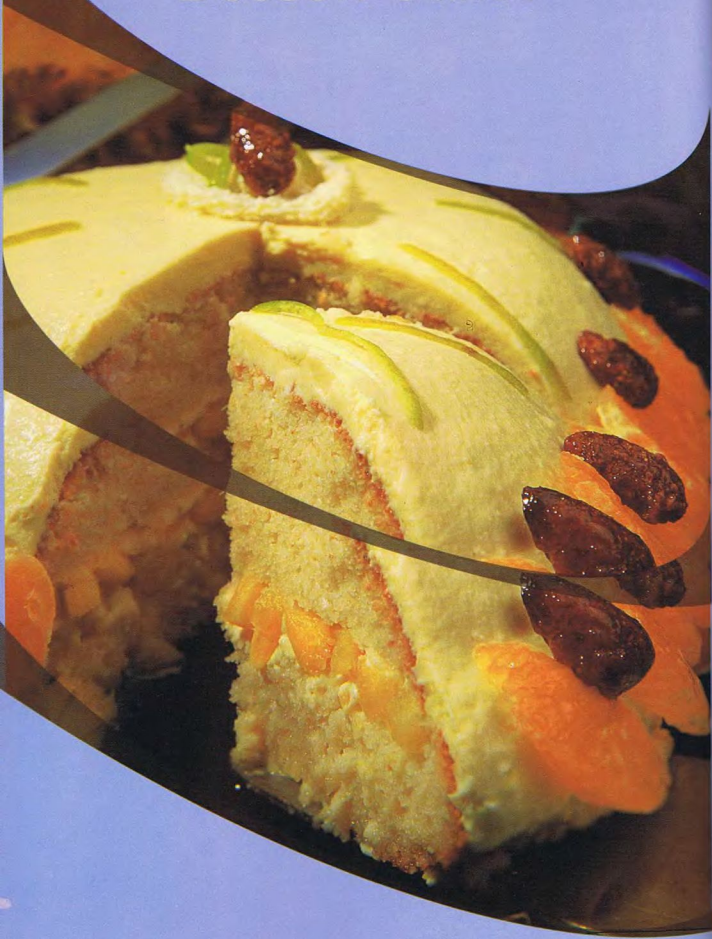
- 1 Take ½ cup milk in a small pan. Sprinkle gelatine on it and leave aside.
- 2 Combine the remaining 1½ cups milk, sugar and cream. Heat well stirring all the time, only till sugar dissolves. Do not boil. When well heated, remove from heat.
- 3 Heat milk with gelatine on low heat, stirring constantly till gelatine is completely dissolved.
- 4 Add hot gelatine to milk-cream mixture. Mix well. Let it cool to room temperature.
- 5 Add essence and blanched almonds. Check sugar.

- 6 Transfer to a serving dish. If you want to unmould the dessert for individual serving, rinse small glass bowls or tart moulds with water and do not wipe. Transfer the above mixture to the wet bowls or tart mould. Keep in the fridge to set well, for about 3-4 hours.



- 7 After it is set, prepare the sauce. Mix strawberry crush/preserve, water and sugar in a pan and bring to a boil. Add cornstarch and cook till sauce coats the back of a spoon and attains a thick pouring consistency.
- 8 Decorate the set souffle by pouring sauce with a spoon to make diagonal lines or diamonds on the set dessert. Arrange strawberry halves or cherries. Sprinkle toasted almonds.
If using bowls or tart moulds then unmould souffle on a small serving platter & follow decoration in the same way as given above for the serving dish. Serve chilled.

Dessert Cakes



Striped Chocolate Cheesecake

Hung yogurt is used to make this chocolate and white striped cheesecake which has a baked crust.

Serves 12

INGREDIENTS

BISCUIT BASE

20 pieces Graham crackers

1/3 cup melted butter

1/4 cup caster sugar

CHEESECAKE

125 g/4 oz butter, (1 stick) - softened

4 cups yogurt - hang for 2 hours in a cheese cloth

1 1/2 cups powdered sugar

3 tbsp gelatine, 2 tsp lemon juice

60 g/2 oz chocolate, preferably dark - at room temperature

METHOD

- 1 Place the crackers in a plastic bag & crush them with a rolling pin to get crumbs. Mix in melted butter and sugar with finger tips. Press into the base of an 8" loose bottomed cake tin. Bake in a pre-heated oven at 180°C/350°F for 10 minutes.
- 2 Beat butter till smooth. Add hung yogurt and sugar. Beat well.
- 3 Sprinkle gelatine on 1/4 cup water and 2 tsp lemon juice kept in a small micro proof bowl. Keep aside for 10 minutes. Microwave for 20 seconds to dissolve it.
- 4 Add 3-4 tbsp yogurt mix to the gelatine and mix well. Add this gelatine slowly to the remaining yogurt mixture, stirring well after each addition. Mix well.
- 5 Divide the mixture into two parts.
- 6 Cut the chocolate into small pieces. Add 1/4 cup water & keep in a heavy bottomed pan on very low heat, stirring until melted properly. Add 1/2 of the melted chocolate to one cheesecake mixture, keeping the other mixture white.
- 7 Pour the chocolate curd mixture on the cracker base in the tin. Keep the white mixture aside.
- 8 Chill chocolate cheesecake for 1/2 hour in the freezer to firm up.
- 9 Remove from freezer. Pour remaining white mixture (whip it if it sets) on top of the chocolate mixture and now chill in the refrigerator.
- 10 After 1 hour, when the top layer of the cheesecake is set, pour the left over melted chocolate over the cheesecake. Serve after 3-4 hours or after it sets.



Pina Orange Dome Cake

A cake soaked in orange juice, a topping of low-cal yogurt and plenty of pineapple – presented in an impressive dome shape.

Serves 12

INGREDIENTS

CAKE

1 pack plain sponge cake mix

OTHER INGREDIENTS

1 cup orange juice - to soak cake

1 cup finely chopped pineapple

FRESH PINEAPPLE TOPPING

2 cups chopped pineapple

2½ tbsp sugar

1 cup yogurt - hang for 1½ hours in a cheese cloth

5 tbsp icing sugar, or to taste

½ tsp pineapple extract

½ cup heavy whipping cream

some yellow food colour

DECORATION

1 orange - separate into segments and cut each segment lengthwise into half a few honey coated or sweetened almonds

METHOD

- 1 Prepare the cake batter as per the instructions. Spoon batter into an 10" dome shaped cake tin or a heat proof (borosil) glass bowl, greased with oil. Bake in a pre-heated oven as given.
- 2 Loosen cake with a spatula, cool thoroughly before removing from pan. Take out on the wire rack. Invert the cake to get the dome top. If the cake does not sit flat, cut a thin layer from the bottom. (This happens if the cake rises a little extra from the middle, a peaked cake!)
- 3 Cut the cake into 2 pieces horizontally. Pour orange juice on both pieces all over to moisten the cake very nicely. Keep aside.
- 4 For the pineapple topping, grind pineapple to a puree to get about 1 cup puree. Microwave the puree with 2½ tbsp sugar for 7 minutes till it turns dry like jam. Chill the puree. (Never add pineapple without cooking to any milk products - It turns bitter!)
- 5 Beat cream till it forms firm peaks. Keep aside. Beat hung yogurt with 5 tbsp icing sugar, pineapple extract and cold pineapple puree till smooth. Fold the cream into yogurt mix. Add more powdered sugar as needed. Add colour to this topping if you like.
- 6 Spread 2 tbsp pineapple topping on one piece of the soaked cake placed on the serving platter. Spread the finely chopped pineapple. Spread some topping on the other piece of cake and invert it on the first piece. Press.
- 7 Cover the cake with the left over topping. Cut orange segments into half lengthwise and arrange at the bottom. Decorate with almonds and strips of orange rind.



Fresh Fruit Gateau

A readymade cake is soaked in orange juice and sandwiched with whipped cream. A decoration of fresh fruit for a perfect, easy-to-make gateau.

Serves 8

INGREDIENTS

10"/25 cm round plain vanilla sponge cake

375 g/12 oz heavy whipping cream

6 tbsp caster sugar

1 tsp vanilla essence

2-3 tbsp strawberry jam or preserve

1 cup orange juice

fresh fruits of different colours -

strawberries, supputa or kiwi

grapes or cherries

GLAZE

¼ cup sugar, ¼ cup water

½ tsp butter

1 tsp gelatine - sprinkled over 2 tbsp water

METHOD

- 1 Whip cream with caster sugar and essence till it can stand in firm peaks. Fill some of it in the icing gun. Keep in the refrigerator.
- 2 Cut cake into 2 round halves.
- 3 Soak each piece with orange juice on the cut surface.
- 4 Slice the fruit for topping and cut the not so neat pieces into tiny cubes to get about ½ cup of chopped fruit.
- 5 Place one round of cake on the serving plate. Put 2-3 heaped tbsp cream and spread gently. Spread some chopped fruit.
- 6 Apply jam or preserve on the second piece of cake and invert on the fruits. Press.
- 7 Cover with cream on the top & sides. Cut grapes into halves and press on the sides on the cream. Pipe a cream border on the top edges.
- 8 Decorate with fresh fruits. Start by arranging strawberries on the outer border. Half the kiwi or supputa slices and fix a row of them at the ends of strawberries, slightly overlapping each other, keeping them a little upright by making them rest on the strawberries. Fix another row in the same way around it. Arrange grapes or cherries in the centre. Chill.
- 9 For the glaze, boil sugar and water together for 2-3 minutes till a thin sugar syrup is ready. Add the soaked gelatine and stir on low heat without boiling till the gelatine dissolves completely. Add butter. Remove from heat. Let it cool down. Brush the glaze on the arranged fruits. Refrigerate till the time of serving.





Chocolate Temptation

A yogurt-chocolate cake with chocolate filling and chocolate topping – who can resist this temptation?

Makes 10-12 slices

INGREDIENTS

YOGURT CHOCOLATE CAKE

- 2 large eggs, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup powdered sugar
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup ordinary sugar, $\frac{2}{3}$ cup yogurt
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup cocoa powder
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups plain flour (*maida*)
- 1 tsp baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup oil

TO SOAK

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup cold milk, 1 tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp rum or brandy (optional)

CHOCOLATE CREAM FILLING

- 180 g/6 oz heavy whipping cream ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup)
- 4 tbsp powdered sugar, 3-4 tbsp cocoa
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp vanilla extract

TOPPING

- 60 g/2 oz cream
- 1 tsp butter - softened
- 90 g/3 oz cooking chocolate - cut into small pieces

METHOD

- Grease an 8"/20 cm round tin. Preheat oven to 180°C/350°F.
- To prepare the cake, mix ordinary sugar, yogurt, cocoa and vanilla essence in a large bowl. Beat well till sugar dissolves. Keep aside.
- Beat powdered sugar and eggs till frothy and double in volume.
- Add oil to the eggs gradually, beating all the time.
- Sift flour and baking soda together.
- Fold the flour and eggs in batches into the yogurt-cocoa mixture in the bowl. Bake in the prepared tin at 180°C/350°F for 1 hour. Remove from oven. Let it cool. Remove from tin on a wire rack after it is no longer hot.
- Cut through the cake, horizontally into 3 rounds.
- For soaking, mix $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of cold milk with 1 tbsp sugar and 1 tsp rum or brandy.
- To prepare the filling, beat cream with powdered sugar, cocoa and essence till soft peaks form. Keep some in the icing bag for decoration.
- Place a round of cake on a serving plate. Soak cake with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of prepared milk. Spread half of the chocolate cream on it. Invert the second round of cake on it. Soak cake again. Spread the left over cream. Finally place the last round of cake on it.
- Press very lightly. Dust the top to get rid of any crumbs. Soak again with milk. Keep aside.
- To prepare the topping, heat the cream in a small heavy bottomed pan, on low heat. Add chocolate pieces and butter and stir continuously for a minute, till chocolate melts and you get a smooth paste. Immediately pour over the cake. Pipe swirls of chocolate cream kept in the icing bag. Refrigerate till serving time.

Fruit Ganache Slice

This quick dessert is made with crushed biscuits covered with a mixture of cream and melted chocolate (known as ganache.) Decorated with fresh fruit for contrasting colour and texture.

Serves 10

INGREDIENTS

200 g/6 oz - Graham Crackers or Marie biscuits - crushed into very tiny pieces
¼ cup black raisins
200 g/6 oz cooking chocolate - chipped (2 cups)
½ cup heavy whipping cream
½ tsp vanilla extract/essence
3-4 strawberries or 1 kiwi or 1 orange

METHOD

- 1 Crush biscuits and mix extract with it. Add raisins.
- 2 Heat cream on very low heat in a heavy bottomed pan. Add chipped chocolate to it. Mix well till chocolate melts. Remove from heat and stir well to make a smooth sauce or ganache.
- 3 Mix a little more than half of the ganache with the crushed biscuits, just enough to bind the mixture nicely.
- 4 Line a loaf tin with aluminium foil and put the mixture in it. Press and level it. Keep in the freezer for 10 minutes till set.
- 5 Demould the set biscuits on a wire rack. Place a plate underneath the rack. Heat the remaining ganache, if need be with a tbsp of water and pour on the set biscuit mixture. Level the ganache on the sides with palette knife and keep it back in the fridge for 10 - 15 minutes to set.
- 6 Cut into 2" square pieces and decorate it with any slice of fresh fruit of your choice. Serve cold.





Glazed Kiwi Cheesecake

As pretty as a picture, light and delicious, soothingly cool – a must-try recipe!

Serves 12

INGREDIENTS

BASE

20 digestive biscuits
4-5 tbsp melted butter

CHEESECAKE FILLING

2 kiwis - peeled and ground to a puree
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water, 4 tbsp sugar
500 g/1 lb heavy whipping cream (2 cups)
4 tbsp cheese spread (plain)
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup caster sugar, or to taste
5 tsp gelatine
few drops of green colour

GREEN GLAZE

1 kiwi - blend to a puree
2 tsp gelatine - soaked in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water
3 tbsp sugar, a few drops green colour

METHOD

- 1 For the base, crush biscuits roughly with a rolling pin by placing them in a polythene. Transfer to a bowl. Add melted butter. Press biscuits at the bottom of a loose bottom tin of 8" diameter. Place in the fridge to set. See note.



- 2 Boil puree of 2 kiwis, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water and 4 tbsp sugar in a pan, stirring continuously on low heat. Simmer for 2 minutes. Remove from heat.
- 3 Sprinkle gelatine on $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water kept in a small micro-proof bowl. Keep aside for 10 minutes. Microwave for 20 seconds to dissolve it. Add gelatine to kiwi mix.
- 4 Beat cheese spread with 1 cup caster sugar till smooth. Add cream and beat till fluffy. Add the kiwi puree. Add some colour if required. Check sweetness and add more if needed. Pour over the biscuit base. Keep in the fridge for 3-4 hours to set.
- 5 To prepare the green glaze, soak 2 tsp gelatine in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water. Heat on low heat, stirring continuously till gelatine dissolves. Add kiwi puree and 3 tbsp sugar. Simmer for 1 minute on low heat to dissolve sugar. Remove from heat. Add enough colour and bring down to room temperature.
- 6 Spoon glaze over the set cheesecake. Keep it in the fridge to set. Remove from tin and decorate with kiwi slices.

Note: *Instead of the biscuit base, a cake base can also be used. Cut a sponge cake horizontally to get a 1" thick round cake. Roll it with a rolling pin and fit it into the loose-bottom cake tin.*



Party Ice Cream Cake

A chocolate cake is sandwiched between two layers of vanilla ice cream – all dressed up for the party!

Serves 12-16

INGREDIENTS

- 1 box chocolate cake mix
- ½ gallon/1 litre vanilla ice cream
- ½ cup blueberry jam or conserve or orange marmalade
- a few chocolate thins
- a few chocolate wafer rolls or sticks

SOAKING SYRUP

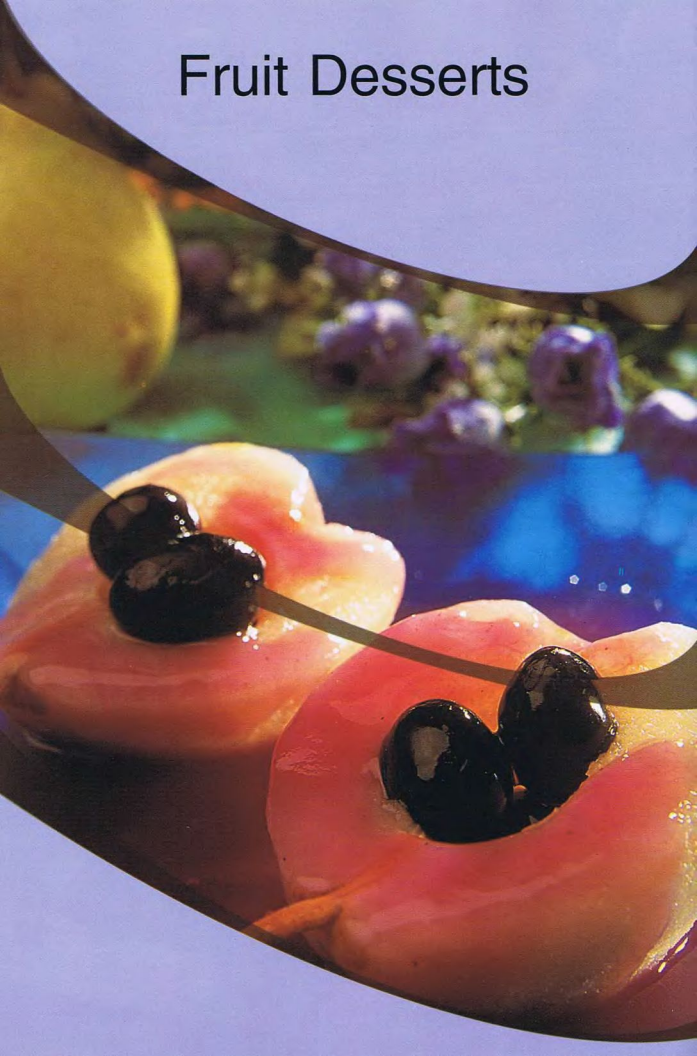
- ½ cup water, 2 tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp coffee
- 1 tsp butterscotch extract

METHOD

- 1 Prepare the cake batter as per the instructions. Spoon batter into a large baking tin so that you have a not too high cake. If the tin size mentioned is 10", use a bigger size, about 12" diameter. Use a spring form (loose bottom) cake tin. Bake in a pre-heated oven as given.
- 2 Remove cake from the tin on a wire rack. If it is higher than 1½-2", slice off the top to get this height.
- 3 Prepare the soaking syrup by boiling sugar and water. Simmer for 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Add coffee and butterscotch extract. Keep aside.
- 4 Clean the tin well. Put half of the ice cream in it and level with a spoon. Break 3-4 chocolate thins into pieces and sprinkle on the ice cream.
- 5 Spread some conserve on both sides of the cake. Press the cake gently on the ice cream. Soak cake with coffee syrup to make it really moist. Wait for 5 minutes. Top with the remaining ice cream. Level it nicely. Sprinkle some chipped chocolate thins. Decorate with diagonally cut chocolate thins and chocolate sticks. Keep in the freezer for 60 minutes to set. Cover loosely with plastic wrap or foil and freeze till serving time.



Fruit Desserts



Fried Bananas 'n' Cream

A simple but delicious dessert. I never thought a dessert made of bananas could have such a divine taste.

Serves 6

INGREDIENTS

- 125 g/4 oz 1 stick unsalted butter
- 3 medium bananas (should be ripe but firm. Do not use overripe bananas)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp citric acid, (this prevents the sugar from crystallizing)
- 6 tbsp sugar
- 6 tbsp rum (dark)
- 1 tsp cinnamon powder
- 6 tbsp chopped mixed nuts (almonds, cashewnuts, walnuts or any of your choice) - roasted
- 1 cup whipped cream - to serve

METHOD

- 1 Dry-roast the nuts on a griddle. Keep aside till serving.
- 2 Peel the bananas and slice into half lengthwise. Cut each into 2 pieces diagonally.
- 3 Melt butter in a large frying pan over medium heat.
- 4 Fry the bananas in it to a golden brown. If necessary fry them in batches.
- 5 Arrange sliced bananas in a single layer in a dish.
- 6 In another pan (you can use the same frying pan along with the remaining butter also) mix together sugar, rum, cinnamon powder and citric acid. Cook stirring all the time till all the sugar is dissolved and a glaze is formed. Pour over the bananas.
- 7 To serve, you can serve bananas at room temperature garnished with toasted nuts. Serve chilled cream separately in a bowl. If you wish, you can chill the bananas in the fridge, pour cream on top and garnish with toasted nuts and serve.

Note: Cream can be sweetened if you so desire.



Fruit Balls in Shahi Kheer

Balls of melon are given the shahi (royal) treatment with a silver-sheet garnish. They are floated on kheer to give a new twist to a traditional dessert.

Serves 6

INGREDIENTS

- 16-20 watermelon balls or mango balls made with a melon baller
- 2 sheets of silver sheets (*varq*), optional
- ¼ cup sugar or to taste
- 1000 ml/1¾ pint full fat milk
- ¾ cup boiled rice, slightly overcooked
- ¼-½ tsp saffron (*kesar*) - soaked in

GARNISH

- a few rose petals
- a few green pistachios - blanched and sliced

METHOD

- 1 Open up a silver sheet carefully. Place 3 fruit balls on it leaving some space in-between the fruits. Carefully lift the paper beneath the silver sheet to coat the fruit with it. Do not touch the sheet directly. Keep some fruit without the silver also. Keep fruit covered in the refrigerator.



- 2 Boil milk in a heavy bottomed wok. Add cooked rice and soaked saffron. Reduce heat and cook stirring frequently, till it is reduced to about half the quantity and is slightly thick and you get a *kheer* like consistency (thick pouring consistency). Keep mashing in between.

- 3 Add sugar to taste. Cook for 5 minutes to dissolve sugar. Remove from heat. Cool. Cover and keep in the fridge. (Do not pour in the serving dish!)

- 4 At the time of serving, mix it well. If it appears thick, thin down with some milk. Transfer to a shallow serving dish. Top the *kheer* with fruit. Garnish with rose petals and sliced pistachios. Serve chilled.

Note: A melon baller is a useful gadget. It is shaped like a rounded spoon with a tiny hole in the center. Scoop the spoon into soft fruit to cut out perfect round ball shapes.



Pears in Raspberry Sauce

A cinnamon-scented syrup for these stewed pears that are partnered with hot raspberry syrup.

Serves 12

INGREDIENTS

6 small pears (*naashpati*)
2 cups water, ½ cup sugar
2 tsp lemon juice
1-2" stick cinnamon (*dalchini*)
½ cup black grapes - halved if big

SAUCE

2 cups reserved pear syrup
2 tbsp strawberry custard powder
1-2 drops raspberry red food colour

METHOD

- 1 Boil water with sugar, lemon juice and cinnamon stick in a pan. Remove from heat.
- 2 Wash the fruit well. Peel the pears, reserving the peels for the sauce. Cut into equal halves. Remove the seeds with a small melon baller carefully to make a neat hollow.
- 3 Immediately keep adding the fruit as you prepare it, into the hot sugar syrup, otherwise it may turn black. Turn fruit to wet all sides of the fruit.
- 4 After all the fruit is added to the syrup, return syrup to heat. Boil again. Cook pears in syrup for 2-3 minutes or till just tender. Remove from heat.
- 5 Remove the fruit from the syrup and arrange it with scooped side up in a shallow serving dish. Fill the scooped portion with black grapes.
- 6 For the sauce, to the syrup add the reserved peels. Cover and boil for 1 minute more.
- 7 Remove from heat and strain the syrup. Discard peels. Keep the clean syrup on heat.
- 8 Dissolve custard powder in ¼ cup water and add to the syrup. Boil, stirring continuously, till the sauce starts to coat the spoon. Remove from heat. Add colour.
- 9 Pour the hot sauce over the pears and let it fall to cover the bottom of the dish too. Cool in the fridge. Serve cold.



Toffee Apples

Apple pieces are dipped in batter, deep-fried & coated in caramel syrup & sesame seeds.

Serves 4-6

INGREDIENTS

2 apples
1 cup oil for deep frying

BATTER

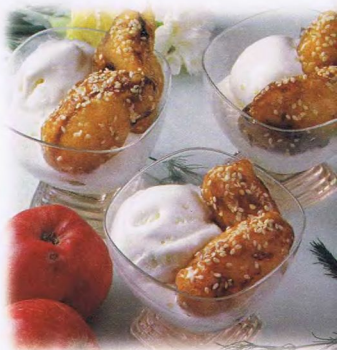
¼ cup plain flour (*maida*)
½ cup cornstarch
½ tsp baking powder
1 tsp sugar, 1 tbsp oil
½ cup water, approx.

CARAMEL COATING

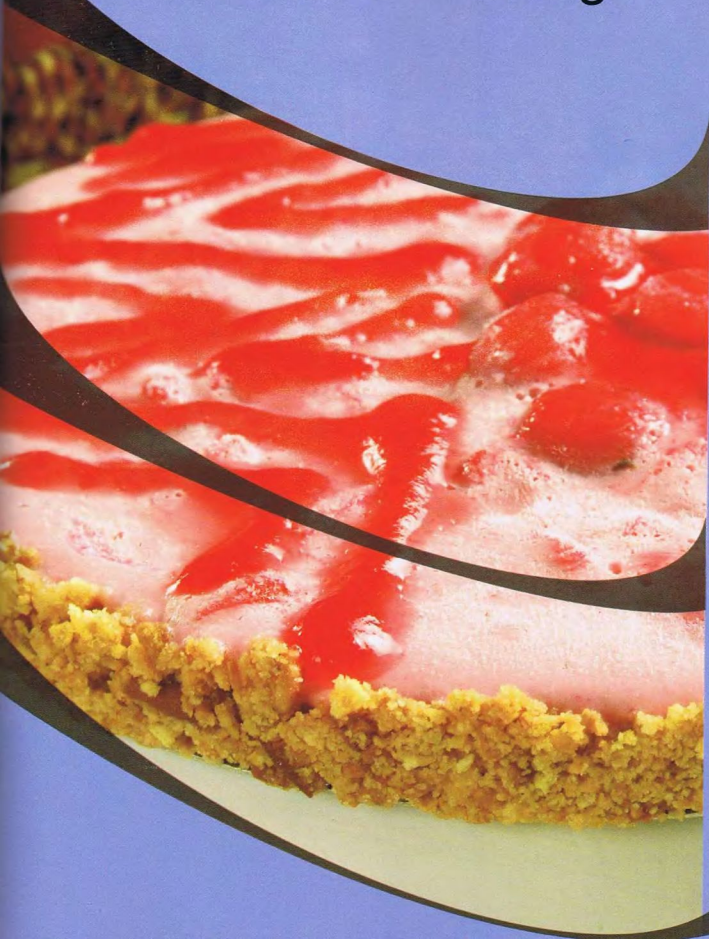
1 cup sugar
1½ cups water
1 tbsp sesame (*til*) seeds

METHOD

- 1 For the caramel coating, boil sugar and water together in a non stick skillet on medium flame till it attains a one-string consistency, for about 20 minutes. Do not discolour the syrup.
- 2 When the mixture begins to bubble, stir continuously to prevent the sugar from burning.
- 3 Continue stirring the pan until the syrup is light brown in colour and feels sticky when felt between the thumb and the fore finger. It forms a thread when the finger is pulled apart.
- 4 Remove from the heat. Keep the caramel syrup aside.
- 5 Mix all batter ingredients in a bowl. Add enough water to get a smooth, thick batter of a coating consistency.
- 6 Peel and cut each apple into four pieces. Remove the seeds. Cut each piece into 3 pieces lengthwise.
- 7 Heat 1 cup oil for frying. Coat the apple pieces evenly with the batter and deep fry on medium heat till golden brown. Let the apples be in oil for another 2 minutes to turn crisp. Drain on kitchen towel.
- 8 Keep a serving bowl filled with ice-cubes ready and cover with water.
- 9 Put the fried apples in the caramel syrup and coat evenly. Sprinkle sesame seeds and mix. Drain well and dip immediately into the ice-cubes bowl. Keep for a minute till the caramel coating hardens.
- 10 Drain thoroughly. Keep aside till serving time. Serve plain or with ice cream.



Pies and Puddings





Cherry Sorbet Flan

A baked biscuit and walnut base supports this luscious and beautiful flan.

Makes 16 slices

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE FLAN

20 Graham crackers or marie biscuits
¼ cup walnuts - crushed coarsely
6 tbsp softened white butter - melted

SORBET

4½ cups milk
3 tbsp white vinegar
½ cup strawberry crush
6 tbsp plain yogurt
½ cup cream
3-4 drops strawberry extract/essence

OTHER INGREDIENTS

1 cup tinned cherries
5 tbsp mixed fruit or strawberry jam
2 tbsp water
a few mint leaves
10" pie pan/flan tin

METHOD

- 1 Boil 4½ cups milk in a deep heavy base pan. As soon as the boil comes, add vinegar. Stir and remove from heat. Stir again gently till milk curdles and a greenish whey separates. Strain the cheese. Leave in the strainer for 10 minutes. Discard the whey. (Whey has a lot of protein and is a good hair rinse!)
- 2 Stone the cherries. Keep 8-9 cherries aside for decoration and chop the remaining. Grease an 10" flan tin and pre-heat oven at 180°C/350°F.
- 3 Crush biscuits and walnuts separately in a plastic bag with a rolling pin. Mix crushed walnuts and biscuits together. Add melted butter to coarsely ground biscuits and walnuts. Mix well.
- 4 Put the biscuit mix into the greased tin and evenly spread out to line the bottom & a little of the sides of the tin. Press with your palm to even out. Bake for 10 minutes at 180°C/350°F. Remove from oven and cool.
- 5 Put the prepared cheese and all the ingredients of the sorbet in a mixer. Blend well to get a smooth mixture.
- 6 Mix chopped cherries with the sorbet filling.
- 7 Heat jam and water in a pan for about a minute, to break all lumps. Spread the jam mix evenly with the brush on the cooled biscuit base.
- 8 Pour the sorbet filling into the biscuit base and spread it evenly towards the sides with a spatula. Keep in the freezer for 1 hour to set.
- 9 Decorate the set dessert with remaining cherries and mint leaves. Put 3 tsp of crush in a paper cone and pipe a zig-zag design on one side. Cover with a cling wrap and keep in the freezer for 4-5 hours or till frozen.

Pear & Almond Pie

Learn how to make a perfect pastry base for this pie; fill it with pears and powdered almonds then bake and serve warm with cream!

Serves 8

INGREDIENTS

PASTRY

- 1½ cups (185 g/6 oz) flour (*maida*)
- 1 tbsp powdered sugar
- 75 g/2½ oz butter - cut into small cubes and chilled
- 1 egg separated, 1-2 tbsp iced water

FILLING

- 500 g/1 lb pears (*naashpati*) - peeled, cored and cut into thin slices
- ½ cup water, ¼ cup sugar
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 4 tbsp butter (½ stick)
- 125 g/4 oz powdered sugar
- 2 eggs, 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 60 g/2 oz almonds - ground to a rough powder (about ½ cup), 1 tbsp flour

METHOD

- 1 For the pastry, sift flour and sugar. Put in a mixer. Add chilled butter in the mixer and blend until the mixture resembles bread crumbs. Do not keep the mixer running for too long at a stretch. Switch it off in between and push the flour down the sides of the mixer with a flat spatula. Once the mixture turns crumbly, add the egg yolk and about 2 tbsp iced water in the mixer, and blend until the mixture just starts to bind.
- 2 Remove the mixture from the mixer to a bowl. Bring the dough together with your hands, form into a ball.

- 3 Knead very lightly, without applying pressure. Wrap in a plastic wrap and keep for 30 minutes in the fridge.
- 3 Roll out the chilled pastry and line the base and sides of 9" loose bottomed pie pan. If it is difficult to roll, spread it with your hands in the pie pan. Prick with a fork. Bake blind at 200°C for 15 minutes or until the pastry is very light golden. Remove from oven. Cool and brush with egg white to seal.
- 4 For the filling, boil water, sugar and lemon juice in a pan. Add pears and cook for 2 minutes till crisp-tender. Let them cool in the syrup.
- 5 Beat butter and powdered sugar till creamy. Add eggs one at a time, beating well. Add extract, almond powder & 1 tbsp flour & mix well.
- 6 Drain the pears and discard the syrup. Arrange pears, (keeping some for the top) over the base of the pastry and spread the almond mixture over them.
- 7 Arrange the left over pears over lapping slightly forming a border. Brush with melted butter and sprinkle 1 tbsp sugar on them.
- 8 Bake at 180°C/350°F for 30-40 minutes, or until mixture is set and golden brown on top. Serve warm or at room temperature, cut into wedges with cream or ice cream.





Fruity Coconut Pudding

By covering this dessert with foil before baking, you create a pudding-like texture, so moist and crumbly, full of fruit and grated coconut.

Serves 8

INGREDIENTS

500 g/1 lb apples/pears - peeled and cut into small pieces, ¼ cup sugar
75 g/2½ oz butter - softened
75 g/2½ oz powdered sugar
100 g/6½ oz plain flour (*maida*)
1 tsp baking powder
½ cup desiccated coconut (coconut powder), 2 tbsp black raisins (*kishmish*)
2 eggs
1 tsp vanilla essence
¼-½ cup milk, approx.

TOPPING

1 tbsp melted butter, 2 tbsp brown sugar

THIN CUSTARD TO SERVE

1½ cups milk dissolved in 1½ tbsp custard powder
2 tbsp sugar, or to taste

METHOD

- 1 Cook fruit with ¼ cup sugar for about 3 minutes, stirring constantly, till slightly soft. Put the stewed fruits in a greased glass oven proof serving dish. Choose a big serving dish, about 3" in height. Keep aside.
- 2 Sift flour and baking powder. Add coconut powder and black raisins. Keep aside.
- 3 Separate egg whites in a small bowl. Beat till stiff peaks form. Keep aside.
- 4 In a big mixing bowl, beat the butter, powdered sugar, egg yolks and essence until light and fluffy.
- 5 Add flour mixture. Add just enough milk to get a soft dropping consistency. Mix lightly with a wooden spoon.
- 6 Gently fold the beaten egg whites with a spoon into the pudding mixture.
- 7 Spread the pudding batter over the fruit. Sprinkle brown sugar and pour 1 tbsp melted butter. Cover with foil loosely.
- 8 Bake in a pre-heated oven at 180°C/350°F for 30 minutes or until firm to touch. Remove from oven.
- 9 For custard, mix all ingredients in a heavy bottom pan and cook stirring till the custard starts coating the spoon. Serve pudding with hot or cold custard.

Crème Caramel

The perfect proportions of this recipe guarantee success every time you make everyone's favourite dessert.

Serves 6

INGREDIENTS

3 cups milk
5 tbsp sugar
3 tbsp milk powder
1 tsp vanilla custard powder
3 eggs

1 tsp vanilla essence
2 tbsp sugar - to caramelize

DECORATION

½ cup heavy whipping cream
1 tbsp powdered sugar
fresh fruits like gooseberries or cherries
or grapes

METHOD

- 1 Mix the milk with sugar, milk powder and custard powder in a deep heavy-based pan. Mix well with a whisk to dissolve all the lumps. Keep it on heat and boil stirring continuously. After the boil, reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Remove from heat and cool completely.
- 2 Beat eggs and essence well with an egg beater till light and fluffy.
- 3 Add the well beaten eggs to the cooled milk mixture. Keep aside.
- 4 Sprinkle 2 tbsp sugar at the bottom of a ring mould or a jelly mould. Place the mould over low heat holding it with a pair of tongs and melt the sugar till it melts and turns golden brown. Remove from heat and spread it evenly over the base and sides of the mould. Cool till the sugar is set at the bottom and sides of the vessel.
- 5 Pour the milk-egg mixture in the mould. Cover well with aluminium foil. Bake in a preheated oven at 200°C for 15 minutes. You can also steam the pudding if you like.
- 6 Keep the pudding in the fridge so that it gets cold and sets well. Do not unmould till it turns cold.
- 7 To serve, run a knife all around the mould and then invert it on a plate. Give a slight jerk to the mould to take it out.
- 8 Whip the chilled cream with powdered sugar with an electric beater carefully till stiff peaks form. Transfer the cream to an icing bag and chill the bag with cream for 15-20 minutes. Decorate the pudding with whipped cream and fresh fruits.



GLOSSARY OF NAMES/TERMS

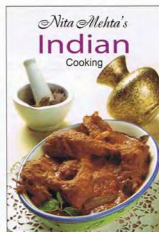
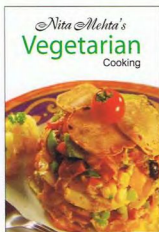
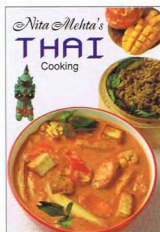
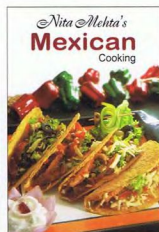
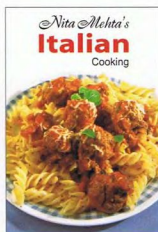
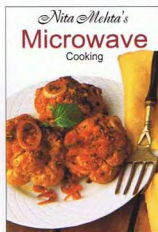
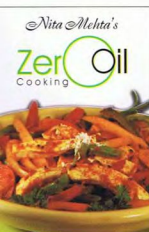
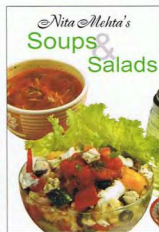
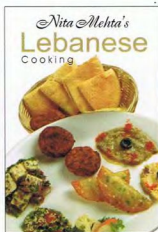
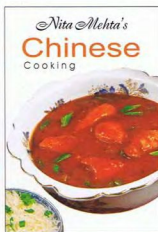
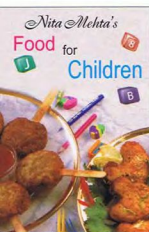
Amaretto, liqueur	Almond-flavoured liqueur
Baking powder	A raising agent consisting of 2 parts cream of tartar to 1 part bicarbonate soda.
Baking soda	Bicarbonate of soda
Brown sugar	Soft sugar containing molasses.
Caster sugar	Finely granulated table sugar
Cherries glaze	Cherries cooked in heavy sugar syrup and dried.
Cointreau, liqueur	Citrus-flavoured liqueur
Cornflour	Also known as cornstarch
Corn syrup	Available light or dark, liquid glucose can be substituted.
Cream	Milk fat, single cream has 18% fat content, whipping cream has 38% fat and double cream 48% fat.
Crème de Cacao, liqueur .	Chocolate-flavour liqueur
Cream cheese	Commonly known as Philadelphia, a soft milk cheese. It can be substituted with 1 cup yogurt hung in muslin cloth for 1 hour to give ½ cup cream cheese.
Crystal sugar	Table sugar
Demerara sugar	Raw unrefined cane sugar.
Evaporated	Unsweetened canned milk from which water has been extracted.
Extract, Essence	Concentration of flavour. Both water and oil based are available. Oil based generally used for flavoring chocolate.
Food colourings	Available in liquid, powder or paste form.
Full cream milk	No fat removed
Ginger	Available fresh, ground, crystallized or glacé.
Golden Syrup	By product of sugar, pure maple syrup or honey can be substituted.
Grand Marnier, liqueur	Orange-based cognac
Icing Sugar	Superfine granulated sugar with addition of 3% corn flour, also known as confectioners sugar.
Irish cream, liqueur	Irish whisky and cream. Popular brand Baileys.
Kahlua, liqueur	Coffee-flavoured liqueur
Kirsch, liqueur	Cherry-flavoured liqueur
Malt	A sweet extract of barley or rice
Mixed dried fruit	Combination of sultanas, raisins, currants, mixed peel and cherries.
Pastry	Baked dough crust used for sweet or savoury fillings.
Petit fours	Very small fancy cakes.
Self-raising flour	Plain flour with baking powder to the proportion of 1 cup flour + 1 tsp baking powder.
Skimmed or toned milk	Fat removed in different proportion and stated on pack.
Sour cream	Available commercially, fat content 35%, substitute 1 cup single cream + 3 tbsp yogurt + 1 tsp cornstarch.
Sweetened condensed milk	A canned product with more than half water content removed and sugar added to the remaining milk. Very thick and very sweet.

Nita Mehta is a Home Science graduate from Lady Irwin College, Delhi University and a Gold Medalist in M.Sc. (Food & Nutrition). She has authored more than 200 best selling cookery books. Her Book "Flavours of Indian Cooking" won the Best Asian Cookbook Award at the Versailles (Paris) World Cookbook Fair.

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